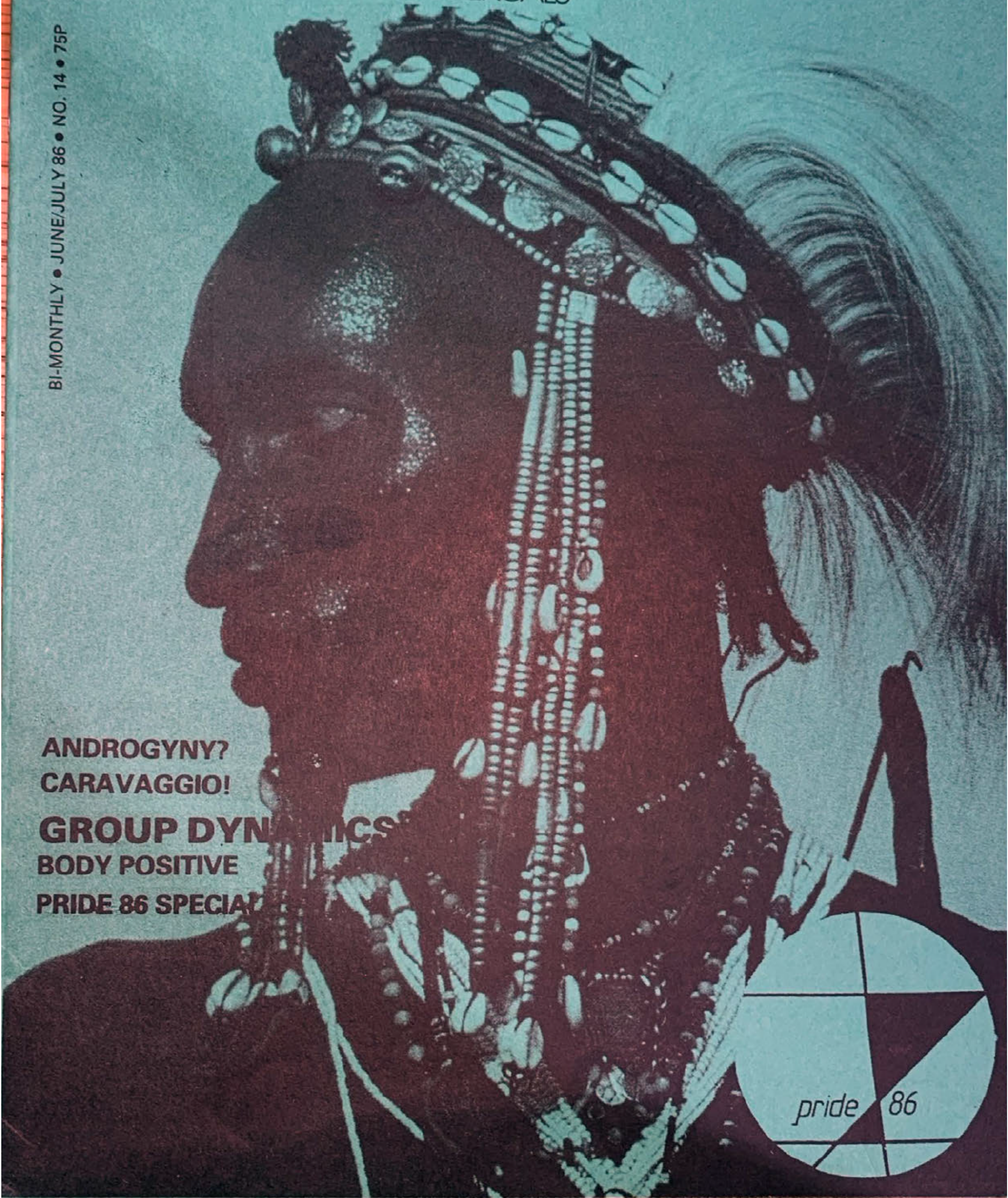
BI-MONTHLY

▽ THE MAGAZINE FOR BISEXUALS

BI-MONTHLY • JUNE/JULY 86 • NO. 14 • 75P



ANDROGYNY?

CARAVAGGIO!

GROUP DYNAMICS

BODY POSITIVE

PRIDE 86 SPECIAL

pride 86

INFORMATION

PERSONAL ADS

+ Personal ads are free. And they can put you in touch with like-minded people all over the country. Write to: BM BI London WC1N 3XX.

TO REPLY TO BOX NUMBERS: Send your reply to BI-MONTHLY 1 Lycett House London SW2 4UZ with the box number clearly marked on the top left hand corner of the envelope.

+ Anyone interested in forming bi-groups in the West Midlands area please write to Alan Taman 14 Whyle Road Sutton Coldfield West Midlands B721 1ND.

+ Bisexual woman, 37, living in open heterosexual relationship, would like to meet other bisexual women in or near Leicester. BI 13:03

+ Bisexual man, 24, seeks bisexual couples and bisexual women for a non-possessive, no-ties sensual friendship. I'm sorry but I cannot offer a full-time monogamous relationship as I have a male love lover of four years standing. BI 13:02

+ I want to meet bsiexuals TVs, people into S&M in or around Coventry. BI 13:01

+ Bisexual architect, living in attractive house in beautiful rural part of Ireland offers free holiday accomodation to individuals or couples in return for friendly companionship and honest, open conversation. No sexual obligation. Phone (from UK) 0365 87121 between 10.30pm and 11.30pm. Or write BI 13:04

+ Bisexual Guv 40, single, easy-going, sense of humour, understanding, would like to meet happy female for caring relationship. BI 14:01

+ Married bisexual male welcomes contacts from other bisexuals, Lowestoft area. BI 14:02

+ Is anyone interested in setting up a bisexual group in Glasgow? If so, please contact GBG, PH7, 340 West Princes St, Glasgow.

+ The Older Lesbian & Bisexual Women's Group is a non-scene group that meets for meals etc in London SW1. Telephone 01-979 0695 (6-8pm).

+ Are there any bisexuals at the University of East Anglia? I'm feeling isolated. BI 12:03

+ Is there anyone interested in setting up a Bisexual Group in the Sutton /Reigate area of Surrey? Contact Norman. BI 14:03

+ I'm a bisexual man of 3i with a Christian outlook on life. I'd like to make some penfriends and contacts - women especially welcome. Staffordshire/ anywhere. BI 14:04

+ Bisexual woman sought by couple to share fun relationship. West Yorks/M1 /London. BI 14:05

COMMERCIAL ADS

AD RATES

Commercial Ads are £1.00 for the first 5 lines (26 characters per line) and 25p per line thereafter.

★ 'Achilles Heel' - an anti-sexist magazine produced by pro-feminist men. Details: 79 Pembroke Rd London E17.

★ Red Stripe, the condom for Safer Sex. £1.25/6 from BMBI London WC1N 3XX

★ M.A.N. - The Men's Anti-Sexist Newsletter now available 80p or £4.20 for 6 from 60 Rhymney St, Cathays, Cardiff.

★ The Gay Bookclub offers over 50 titiles a year at discount prices. Subscription £5p.a. from PO Box 247 London N15 6RW tel 800 5861.

★ Gay's The Word Bookshop is open 7 days a week at 66 Marchmont St London WC1

BISEXUAL GROUPS

BRITAIN

◆Edinburgh Bisexual Group meets Thursdays at Lesbian & Gay Community Centre, 58a Broughton St. Details: Kate 031-556 0497

◆London Bisexual Women's Group drop-in evening every first Monday of the month at Drill Hall, 16 Chenies St, London W1. Details: Zaidie 01-249 3825

◆Tyneside Bisexual Group meets monthly in Newcastle. Details: Simon 0632-615088

◆Sigma - support for relationships where one partner is gay or bisexual. Details: LLGS 01-837 7324

◆Bisexuals & Married Gays Group. Details: Nigel 01-558 5203 (5.30-10pm)

◆London Bisexual Women's Group meets in people's houses. Details: Diana 01-675 6540 (before 10pm.)

◆Brighton Bisexual Group meets on the first Tuesday of every month 8pm at Brighton Unemployed Centre, Prior House, Tilbury Place, Brighton. Encl sae when writing for details.

◆The Radical Lesbian/Gay-Identified Bisexual Network: Pink Dandelion, The Basement, 69 Elm Grove, Brighton BN2 3ET

◆The London Bisexual Group meets Mondays 8.30pm at The Fallen Angel, 63 Graham St, London N1. Details: David 01-340 5729

ABROAD

◆United States: Boston Bisexual Women's Network, PO Box 1534 Jamaica Plain, MA 02130. San Francisco Bisexual Centre 1757 Hayes St San Francisco CA 94117. Chicago Bi-Ways PO Box A333 Q Chicago ILL 60690. University of Massachusets Bisexual Group Amhurst MA 01002

◆Netherlands: Bi-Club PO Box 797, 2003RT Haarlem

◆West Germany: Initiative Bisexueller Frauen & Männer E.Kőcher, Am Niddatal 31, D-6000 Frankfurt 90

MISCELLANEOUS

◆Lesbian & Gay Youth Movement 01-317 9690

◆Gay Legal Advice GLAD 01 821 7672 (Mo-Fr 7-10pm).

◆AIDS Helpline - Terrence Higgins Trust 01-833 2971 (7-10pm)

◆Lesbian Line 01-251 6911

◆London Lesbian & Gay Switchboard 01-837 7324

◆ LEEDS West Yorkshire new AIDS helpline, Mondays & Thursdays 7-9pm (0532)444209.

FOR SALE

To find out how you could benefit from advertising in this space phone

01-359 4463

NEXT ISSUE

MARRIAGE A look at the latest American research into into married bisexuals

ABROAD Back from Europe we'll tell you where to go for a short break.

ARTS Stage & Screen reports from the Edinburgh Festival where a new play looks at the effect AIDS has on a bisexual marriage.

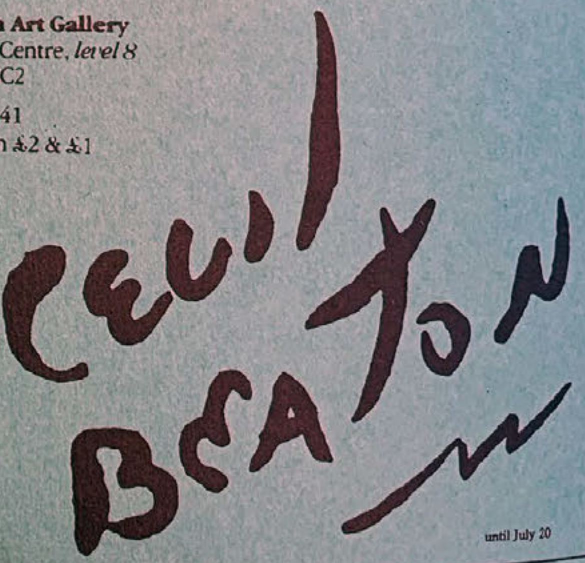
FEEDBACK How bisexual are bisexuals? Report from The Fourth National Conference on Bisexuality.

LESBIAN & GAY MAGAZINES A complete guide to UK publications.

▽BI-MONTHLY No. 15 Aug/Sept is published on July 31st. Deadline for contributions is 15 days prior to publication date, i.e. 16th July.

Barbican Art Gallery
Barbican Centre, *level 8*
London EC2

01-638 4141
Admission £2 & £1



until July 20

BI-MONTHLY
▽THE MAGAZINE FOR BISEXUALS

June 1986

Dear readers of BI-MONTHLY,

You will be interested to know that since the Guardian article appeared in February the number of subscriptions has doubled from 75 to 150 and the number of magazines distributed to bookshops has risen to 200 in London and 100 around the country.

We have attempted to maintain a professional standard of presentation and content on recent issues with the aim of getting the subject of bisexuality taken seriously. Mistakes have been made but the response has been encouraging and we are generally proud of what has been achieved so far — we hope you are too and we enclose a Pride '86 badge with our compliments to stimulate this feeling!

However, the cost of producing a magazine of this quality is high, both in financial terms and in respect of the amount of work required. We want to thank those who have freely contributed their time, energy and expertise to enable this to happen and those members of the collective and subscribers who have made generous donations to finance these efforts.

With the present small circulation we need to raise an additional £200 per issue to cover the production costs, without even thinking about paying our contributors and workers. We believe this magazine is beginning to win a degree of recognition and respect for bisexuals and it is important that it survives and flourishes. If you agree please support us with as large a donation as you can afford!

Yours — David Burkle for BI-MONTHLY.

London Bisexual Group
BM BI London WC1N 3XX

Dear

We are a group of bisexual people who have been working together for a year compiling a book about personal experiences of bisexuality in Britain and Ireland. As vast numbers of bisexuals exist today we think it is important that the subject becomes more public and visible. We plan to publish before the end of the year.

This book aims to encourage discussion and recognition and educate in an area where previously there has been minimal literature. We also aim to stimulate some political analysis although as a group we have no common politic.

Our 64 page publication contains an introduction, 12 in-depth profiles (6 women, 6 men) and numerous comments from others under relevant topic headings. Also there is a final section of information about groups, phonelines and literature. It will be professionally printed, promoted and distributed to give it the widest circulation and appeal.

To;Off Pink Publishing, 31 Cremorne Road, London SW10. No...

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Date . . . Signed, on behalf of Off Pink Publishing . . . . .

Off Pink Publishing, 31 Cremorne Rd, London SW10.

London Bisexual Group
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To this end we need to raise £3000 in donations and interest free loans. If you are sympathetic to our aims, this is an opportunity for you to contribute something practical. To further information about bisexuality, we would welcome donations of any size or , alternatively, a loan (minimum £10). We estimate that all loans will be repaid within 18 months. A volume of this kind is long overdue and we are confident that there is a ready market. Therefore we are sure that sales will repay the loans and repayments will be made as the distributors send us the cheques.

Please contact us if you require more details . Should you wish to read it, a manuscript is available.

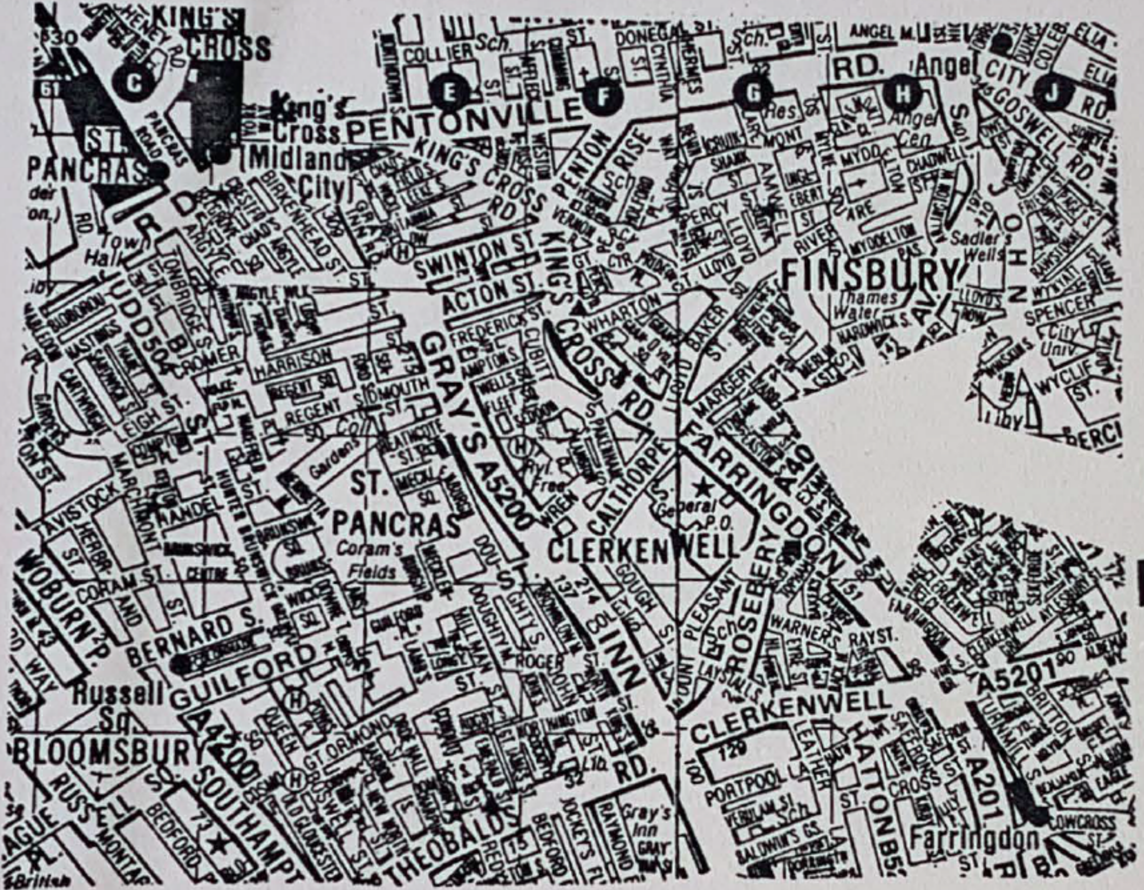
All cheques to be made payable to Off-Pink Publishing. You will be sent a receipt if you wish and a loan number where relevant. Please fill in the enclosed form and send it with your cheque/p.o to: Off-Pink Publishing, 31 Cremorne Rd, London SW10. (tel 01-351-5952).

Thank you in anticipation

Yours Sincerely

The Off-Pink Publishing Group .

LONDON BISEXUAL GROUP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GRAY'S INN RD.
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benefit disco

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SAT 12 JULY 8pm → late

'I had to come out twice, first as a lesbian, and then as a bisexual. The second time was by far the most difficult.' However relaxed our attitudes to homosexuality have become, the bisexual is still viewed with deep suspicion. Assumed allies can even accuse them of treachery. In spite of this, reports David Berry they seem to have evolved into a flourishing and self-sustaining community.

Double trouble

Not simply about sex, but politics, too. Picture in bisexual bar by Martin Argles

KATE Fearnley, Diana Suggate, David Smith and David Burkle are all involved in the newest and fastest growing movement on the sexual fringe, bisexuality. In the pages of their magazine, Bi-Monthly, they report on meetings and conferences around the country and on news from similar groups abroad. They publish personal experience, discussion and analysis about what it is like to be bisexual, and their energy shines out from each page. Bisexuality is not for them merely a personal choice, but an authentic response to sexist society. It is not simply about sex but about politics, too.

Perhaps it is too soon to call this new interest in bisexuality "a movement" since there are only five groups in Britain which use the term. Yet all the signs of a movement are there. There is, for example, the external threat. A poll for an ITV television programme has revealed that 67 per cent of the population disapproves of bisexuality, although 80 per cent supports gay rights. On Weekend World bisexuals were singled out as an invisible but crucial "bridging group" for the spread of Aids from the so-called high risk group of active male homosexuals to the wider heterosexual community.

There is also distrust from people who one might think would be allies. In spite of Bi-Monthly's emphasis on solidarity with gays and lesbians, it is not a solidarity that many gay men and lesbian women want. The magazine reported one bisexual woman as "saddened at the put-down by lesbian women" and another bisexual's experience of gay men's reactions as "almost spiteful." For a short time last year the London Bisexual Group was banned from meeting at the newly-opened Lesbian and Gay Centre in Central London, a ban which was overturned in June but not without strong opposition.

Among bisexual women and men there is a sense of liberation and excitement, a sense of people finding a label that suits them more then "heterosexual" or "lesbian" or "gay" and finding other people, often for the first time, who feel the same way. Open bisexuality for Diana, Kate and the two Davids is no mere fashion. It is here to stay.

David Burkle helped start the first bisexual group in London in 1981. The year before, he had been at an anti-sexist men's conference in Bristol where there had been much talk about bisexuality and about the necessity for heterosexual men sympathetic to feminism to take on board some of the ideas and aspirations of the gay movement.

Burkle and some other men at the Bristol conference formed a small consciousness-raising group on bisexuality. When some of the original men left, the group started organising and advertising open meetings partly to see if women would come along as well as men. These meetings have attracted hundreds of men and women, from London, the South-east and beyond.

"It is clear that there are needs not being met by any other group," says Burkle, "but we haven't got the funds to publish widely our phone numbers for counselling and information. We do, though, put them in the magazine and we have had over 5,000 calls often from people with bisexual feelings who have not been able to talk with anybody before."

If, by this, one imagines the London Bisexual Group to be a meeting-place for heterosexual men and women to explore their gay and lesbian feelings this is true, but only in part. Much of the energy of the group has come from people from a gay or lesbian background who feel open to heterosexual attraction, people like David Smith, Diana Suggate and Kate Fearnley.

Smith joined the group about a year ago after "toying with bisexuality for a while and being appalled by the lack of information about it." He now edits Bi-Monthly and has given the magazine a strong journalistic style, featuring interviews with people who have come out in favour of bisexuality (the current issue questions Peter Tatchell, a forthcoming one Ken Livingstone) and pulling together the research that does exist on the subject.

Diana Suggate was "thrilled to hear about the group" when she arrived in London from her native New Zealand. "I found I was accepted and supported and it was certainly not typical of the heterosexual world. There was much questioning from the men about what it is to be masculine." The London group's meetings are regularly between one third and one half women, and the three national conferences which have taken place in the last two years have had a female majority. Suggate is now a contact for a women-only bisexual group which meets regularly in a member's home and which has recently opened a drop-in centre for bisexual women.

Another woman who came, like Suggate, from a lesbian background, is Kate Fearnley, one of the founding members of the Edinburgh Bisexual Group which meets weekly in that city's Lesbian and Gay Centre. "I had to come out twice, first as a lesbian and then as a bisexual," says Fearnley. "The second time was by far the most difficult."

The problem Fearnley and other lesbian women like her faced was, as one said, that "quite a lot of bisexual women are worried that other women will find out they are having a relationship with a man." If gay male hostility to bisexuality comes from a feeling that bisexuals are sheltering under a label of comparative privilege — the argument is that they can enjoy homosexual relationships while still being able to slip back into heterosexuality when the going gets tough — so lesbian hostility augments this with accusations of sleeping with the enemy and not putting women first.

The pages of Bi-Monthly contain many heartfelt reports of gay and lesbian rejection of bisexuality although it is fair to say that there are other gay men and lesbian women who have given the new bisexual groups their support. The groups are much more a challenge to conventional heterosexuality than to gay or lesbian preference.

There is no consensus in these new bisexual groups about sex, nor would their members want there to be. Each member experiences bisexuality differently. Some change their sexual preference, others reconfirm theirs; some have relationships with women and men at the same time, others consecutively.

The emphasis is on a fluid sexuality rather than a fixed one, says David Burkle. "Bisexuality is everything that is not exclusively gay or lesbian or heterosexual."

The London Bisexual Group acts as a national contact for bisexuality. Its address is BM BI, London WC1N. Bi-Monthly is available from them or from alternative bookshops, priced £4.60 for six issues.

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE......

Many aspects make up sexuality : emotions, relationships, previous experiences for example.

At the 4th National Bisexual Conference we will look at areas that are important in relation to our bisexual identity.

As at previous conferences we will begin with "getting to know you" games introductions and small groups.
We have gathered together a number of offers of workshops which we hope will extend from discussions in deeper, more personal and more enjoyable ways.

* * *

Themes for workshops so far include: personal space, nurturing, contact dance, dramatising life situations, non-competition, trust between men and mental health.

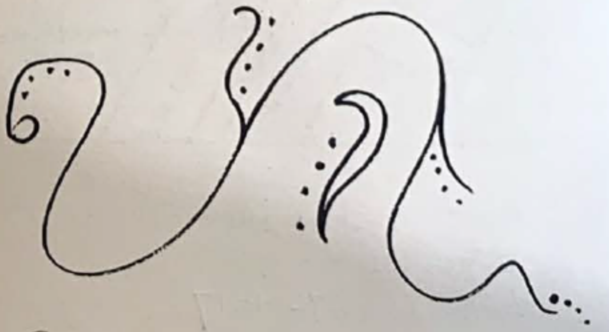
The more recognisable discussion group does of course have its place and there will be time for networking, personal discussion and organising around general issues.

We would like to put up a visual display on Sunday morning and it would be exciting if women could bring their positive images of women and men could bring their positive images of men. (Drawings, photos, printed material etc.)

There is a disco planned in conjunction with the conference for Saturday night and there will be a drawing together of the weekend on Sunday afternoon with the theme of BISEXUAL LIBERATION!

* * *

We hope that this conference will reflect the ways in which our bisexual community is growing as well as working with people who are considering bisexuality for the first time.



STARTS : 10AM.

SARAH: BM-BI, WC1N 3XX

BOOKING FORM

FOURTH NATIONAL BISEXUAL CONFERENCE 12th and 13th JULY 1986

Name: ______
Address: ______
______ Phone: ______

Do you require accommodation? yes ☐ no ☐
If yes, for which nights? fri ☐ sat ☐ sun ☐
Do you need creche facilities? yes ☐ no ☐
If yes, how many children? ______
And what age are they? ______

P.T.O

Celebrate

the

4TH NATIONAL

Bisexual

CONFERENCE

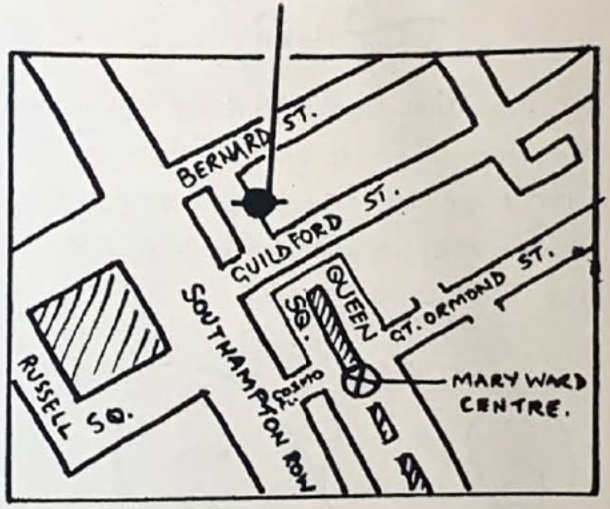
To be held at the:

MARY WARD CENTRE, QUEEN SQUARE, LONDON. WC1

SATURDAY 12th JULY and

SUNDAY 13th JULY 1986

Nearest tube: Russell Square.


BERNARD ST.
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QUEEN SQ.
COSMO PL.
SOUTHAMPTON ROW
RUSSELL SQ.
MARY WARD CENTRE.

For further information contact:
DIANA (01) 675 6540
LINDA (01) 674 1017

Cost: £1.00 - UB40/student. Others - £1.00 for every £1000 earned.
Payment should be made on arrival at the conference.

There is limited disabled access - however, assistance will be available at all times.
There is a disabled toilet.

We have hired a room at the Mary Ward Centre on Friday evening, 11th July for people arriving outside of London to sort out accommodation and for general enquiries.
This will be open from 6-10pm.

THANKYOU!

BI-MONTHLY

▽THE MAGAZINE FOR BISEXUALS

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THIS ISSUE

Produced by: Tom Brooks, Andreas Reda, David Smith
Thanks to: Clare Thomson, Philip Hughes, David Burkle, Matt Milne, Diana Suggate, Sigma, GT
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New magazine for bisexuals

Gay Scotland has been relaunched with a new masthead as GS: for lesbians, gay's & bisexuals. Gs intends to retain its commitment to Scotland, . whilst broadening its appeal to readers in the rest of Britain. "We're keeping the Scottish news but will carry more features, interviews and analysis," says Editor Ian Dunn. "GS is a change from the usual London-centred view!"□

Fourth national conference

The Fourth National Bisexual Conference is to take place in London on July 12 & 13. Organised by the London Bisexual Women's Group the conference, to be held at the Mary Ward Centre in Bloomsbury will feature both workshops and discussions on a wide range of topics within the spectrum of bisexuality.□ Details page nine.

Sex survey needs more help

A Project on Changing Socio-Sexual Lifestyles which is to yield details of the current sexual and related behaviour of gay and bisexual men in London, Cardiff and Newcastle has been launched by Professor Tony Coxon of University College Cardiff and a team of social researchers. Professor Coxon is looking for volunteers 'from the full range of gay/bisexual men' to help him compile this information as 'virtually nothing is known about the sexual behaviour and lifestyles of gay men in Britain'.□

German bisexual conference

A castle on the River Lahn near Marburg, West Germany is the venue for the 1986 meeting of the Initiative of Bisexual Women and Men. The programme will include a seminar by Francis Hüsers on The representation of gays in literature, a workshop on Perspectives in bisexual and homosexual relationships, the continuation of the Theory discussion and the usual workshops on Self-experience. The conference will take place from 13-17 June and is fully residential.

Dutch group active again

A new bisexual support and action group has emerged in Holland. Known as 'Landelijk Netwerk Biseksualiteit' it has a magazine 'Bi-nieuws' and can be contacted at PO BOX 5087, 1007AB Amsterdam.

However the real activities occur on a regional basis, with conversation groups, information and festive evenings.

Preparations are being made for the Dutch National Gay Pride Day on June 28th in Utrecht.

New tolerance in East Germany

Tolerance and encouragement of gay sexuality are increasing in East Germany according to Dr Edwin Guenther of Berlin's Schiller University. The researcher who co-organised a recent first ever scientific conference to provide information on the position of homosexuals in society to public educationalists said the state guaranteed social equality to everyone independent of sexual orientaion. Discrimination would not only be against the law, but against ethical principles and scientific knowledge. The confernce whic which was given coverage by the state news agency and comes in the wake of a more enlightened attitude in medical journals must give encouragement to the emerging lesbian and gay movement in the GDR.□

NEWS MONITOR

■ Contributions to this summary of the news, our former former News in Brief column, should reach us not later than 7 days prior to publication date. Send news-cuttings directly to: News, BI-MONTHLY, 1 Lycett House London SW2 4UZ.

BOB CROSSMAN, a founder member of the Gay Labour Group has become the new Mayor of the London Borough of Islington. □

Gay Life

"Mancunian Gay", Britain's longest-running gay publication, is to be relaunched as "Gay Life" and will be on sale in clubs and pubs throughout the north of England. "We feel that after London and and the South East the North of England comes a very poor third when it comes to coverage in the gay press," said a spokesman for the new magazine. "We hope 'Gay Life' will redress that balance."□

New Charity

Another charity to co-ordinate fund-raising has been set up in London with Gerard Vaughan, a former Tory Health Minister as the chairman. The United Kingdom Aids Foundation will fund medical research and support for people with AIDS. The trustees will be advised by Dr Charles Farthing of St Steven's Hospital and the Terrence Higgins Trust. □

Police guides

New 'Guides to Police Powers' to cover the Police and Criminal Evidence Act are published by GALOP, the Gay London Police Monitoring Group. The act which gives police sweeping powers of search, arrest and detention was a "frightening piece of legislation" say GALOP, which have been denied further funding by the London Boroughs Association. The guides are £1,25 from BM Galop London WC1N 3XX.□

GLC reprieve

The Greater London Council's Lesbian & Gay Working Party has received a new lease of life. The Working Party which inspired the London Lesbian & Gay Centre and 'Changing the World', the London Charter for Gay Rights, is to be taken over by the Association of London Authorities. The Labour-dominated association of 14 of the inner London boroughs is to set up a committee with one full-time paid worker to look at gay issues in the Capital.□

International AIDS

The International Gay Association IGA is holding its eighth annual conference between July 7th and 12th near Copenhagen, Denmark. Main topic will be the political aspects of AIDS.□

New Zealand reform

Gay law reform in New Zealand is nearer after MPs agreed to decriminalise homosexual behaviour between consenting males from 16 years onwards. But a second part of the bill which outlaws discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation was defeated in committee after a right-wing campaign by fundamentalist Christians and MPs. The revised bill has yet to face the final reading before becoming law. □

BODY POSITIVE Facing the challenge of AIDS

Helpline

Every evening from 7-10. Answered by people who are themselves Antibody Positive. Call
Terrence Higgins Trust 01 833 2971
London Friend 01 359 7371
Gay Switchboard 01 837 7324
and ask for the Body Positive number.

M.O.D. denies gay suicide

The Ministry of Defence has officially denied that an officer in the Royal Military Police committed suicide rather than face investigation of his gay relationships.

The allegations, made by John Fanning, an ex-corporal in the Royal Ulster Greenjackets were first brought to light by the Campaign for Homosexual Equality. Fanning was court-martialled and discharged from theArmy in April last year after being found guilty of 'gross indecency' with another soldier who was under 21.

In an interview with City Limits Fanning said that when he was firs first interrogated in January 1985 he told the Militay Police about a sexual relationship he had with an officer. According to Fanning the officer was confronted by his own men and subsequently committed suicide while on a training exercise in the south of England. As a senior officer with a wife an children he could not bear to have his gay relationship investigated, said Fanning.

Harry Cohen MP read out the story in the House of Commons and demanded an inquiry. The case was featured in BI-MONTHLY. But since then Lord Trefgarne of the Ministr Ministry of Defence has written to Mr Cohen to deny the story.

A Royal Military Police Officer did die in a parachute accident, says Lord Trefgarne,but not on the date specified by Corporal Fanning. 'At the subsequent inquest a verdict of death by misadventure was recorded', says the letter to Mr. Cohen. 'Investigations by the military authorities came to the same conclusion,there being no indication that death was other than accidental.'

Tebbit loses chance of leadership

Tory Chairman,Norman Tebbit's anti-gay speech last month has backfired on him. The Conservatives appalling showing at the polls in May has led top Tories to be openly critical of Mr. Tebbit's style and message.

One former senior Tory Minister has described Mr. Tebbit's performance as party chairman as 'a disaster'. And Anthony Beaumont-Dark,MP for Birmingham Selly Oak,called on Mrs Thatcher not to listen to 'her weary political advisers who don't know very much about the world in which we live'.

In a major law and order speech last month Mr. Tebbit blamed the ills of our society on 'the poisoned legacy of the permissive society'.He criticised legislation on homosexuality,capital punishment,abortion,divorce and censorship. 'Tolerance of sexual deviation',he said,'has generated demands for deviance to be treated as the norm.Love for the sinner has slipped in to love of the sin'.

Reports from within Parliament after the speech suggested that Mr Tebbit had lost any hope of becoming Party leader.

But in the face of open criticism Mr Tebbit was unrepentant.'You can't teach an old dog new tricks',he said.'We are determined to force people to think about what is being offered by the other parties rather than fudging the issues'.

Edinburgh Bisexual Group flourishes

Edinburgh Bisexual Group is still flourishing, with weekly meetings on Thursdays (see listing) and lunch every Sunday at the Green Tree in the Cowgate, plus a growing programme of other social and political activities.

A second bisexual disco was held in May and was successful both as an event and as a fundraiser. The group now intends to organise them regularly.

EBG members are very concerned at bisexuals' lack of visibility in society (apart from in AIDS stories) and is trying to remedy this with as much publicity as possible. Every meeting is advertised with posters distributed widely around Edinburgh, and in the Scottish listings magazine, The List. And the group has booked a stall at the busy Meadows Festival to sell books, badges and Bi-Monthlys and to distribute to unsuspecting passers-by a leaflet headed 'If you're not bisexual, read this; if you are, read the back...'

As for Pride '86, EBG are helping in the Edinburgh organisation and will be at the London march in force, complete with banner!

Volunteers needed for Community Radio

Lesbians and gay men working in Community Radio are expecting an imminent announcement from the Home Office about who is to receive licences. But there are fears that gay men in particular may not be ready to take advantage of hours of air time for London's gay community.

The best chance of access to the air comes with Spectrum Radio which has scheduled for seven hours of lesbian and gay programmes every week. In its application to the Home Office Phil Cox of Spectrum said that he was confident that the station,based at Interchange in Kentish Town,would soon be given the go ahead to broadcast.

But delays by the Home Office in deciding who is to be licenced to produce Community Radio have led to many interested gay people drifting away from Spectrum. 'We really need people to get involved again now' said Phil Cox.

First meeting for Manchester Group

Manchester Bisexual Group will hold its first meeting on Thursday 5th June at 8.30 pm at MARC (Manchester Area Resource Centre). There will be a futher meeting on 3rd July.

The Group has been set up by Paul Owen, who works at the Manchester Gay Centre and can be contacted there (P.O. box 153,Manchester 60 1LP) or by phone on 061 228 3554 2-4 pm weekdays.

Boston bisexuals ecstatic at success of conference

A hundred and twenty five people attended a conference on bisexuality in the United States in March.The Third Regional Conference at the University of Southern Maine in Portland was organised by members of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network.

Women and men came from eleven different states in the eastern U.S.

Identity,family,relationships, sex,politics and community were themes running through a huge variety of workshops.

Laura Sachs of the Boston Network said:'I'm ecstatic that it was such a success.'

Members of the group went on to design a 'bisexual T-shirt'and organise events for Gay Pride celebrations in June.

No regrets

Having an abortion is traumatic and can have long-lasting effects. Here Anne Lornfield describes her experience and offers support to other women.

Illustration: Philip Hughes.

The summer of 1981. A new and demanding job. Finally there was something I really wanted to do instead of messing around in temporary jobs. Life would be more settled now. Ten days after starting work I realised I was pregnant.

The co-creator of new life in this case was cute, blond, irresponsible and nineteen. He had already made an exit from my life preferring the comforts of his mother's arms to mine. Somehow I guessed he wasn't an appropriate person to get much-needed support from, let alone consult about his feelings on the matter.

Nor it turned out was my closest female friend. She was great but had trouble at times coping with her own life. Now she proposed to be the mainstay of mine if I would continue with the pregnancy. My family I could not involve, they would have been out of their depth. Well, I think I would have been too. Without their help I needed her 'permission' to have an abortion. She could not give it, perhaps because the pain of her own experience years earlier was still with her. Necessarily I became estranged from her. Sadly our friendship was too damaged to continue.

Are you thinking I decided on an abortion remarkably quickly? I did not. It was a matter carefully considered during the previous five years. My decision had already been made when I had a clearer head to think with. After all I was in no better a position to provide for a child than before.

The next step - my doctor. Within five minutes he agreed that the symptoms made my self-diagnosis correct and he gave me not an examination or test,but a letter for the hospital. Naively I thought the good old NHS would share my sense of urgency. The receptionist told me, 'See the social worker in four weeks time'. 'Please can't it be sooner? I'm ready now!' - 'Sorry dear...' I found a quiet corner of the vast building to weep in.

Both the doctor and the social worker agreed to my wishes, so five weeks later I was on my way to hospital. In that time my body troubled me with frequent nausea, tiredness and an aversion to alcohol. But without either counselling or a test I was able to prevent myself from quite believing in it. The mind can have a powerful switch-off mechanism when required.

Getting to hospital calmly was no problem but the taxi driver got a large tip - a strange sort of guilt at involving him I think. Nobody took charge of me though all were friendly. Without a premed injection my nerve began to falter, especially when I realised that the woman next to me was there for investigation into her fertility.

Eventually I lay on the trolley and began the journey down many corridors to the operating theatre. My hands rested over the place where my baby was still growing. Silently I talked to it: 'Goodbye my special baby,my dear baby. I love you very much'. And I asked that nine week old child for forgiveness.

On arrival several people were involved in giving the anaesthetic and doing other things. One asked me why I was crying and after I told her she said she hadn't realised what I was here for. The surgeon asked me to sign the consent form which hadn't been available in the ward, saying 'You can change your mind, you know?' Being in tears it seemed right to give him a firm assurance to make it - I imagined - less difficult for him. Soon the anaesthetic took all conscious responsibility from me.

Coming-to a little later was an

(continued opposite)

awful mess of sickness,bleeding and discomfort. My body protested at what is actually a very simple, routine surgical procedure.

Back in the ward it was such a relief to recover and feel in control that I couldn't spend the day in despair as I'd expected to. There was a bleak moment when somebody came and stood at the foot of the bed and announced that cooly that they had 'removed all traces of the foetus'. All my physical needs were attended to and late that afternoon I was allowed home.

From then on I just buried it; refused to recognise it had really happened. At first I resumed an open and carefree sex life. Then for the first time I found a male lover to whom I was faithful. Meanwhile I began putting on weight and changing my quite 'sexy' image. Then I began taking risks with contraception and finally realised I was trying to get pregnant again. This scared the hell out of me.

'Spare Rib' advertised a Post Abortion Workshop at the Women's Therapy Centre and I signed up. The two day workshop consisted of five other women and two therapists who had experienced abortion themselves. Two other women were asked by the group to leave: they had come only because of their jobs in a pregnancy advisory service of the type advertised on London Underground and in magazines. They had not had abortions.themselves.

'Where had they put my baby? – it must have been flushed down a drain – it should have had a grave, but that's impossible – will it be born again or have I killed it forever?

I listened to those women and realised how lucky I'd been. One woman was encouraged by her boyfriend to end the pregnancy and was rejected because of it. Another, quite young, became ill and went to the doctor with mum who didn't know about the boyfriend. It was a strict family for cultural reasons. Neither realised the girl could be pregnant, so both were shocked at the doctor's news. She was kept away from the boyfriend and pressured into having an abortion. In fact she was by then too ill to refuse.

Some had recently lost their babies and for others it was months or years in the past. For all there was still unresolved pain guilt and a sense of loss, even for those who like myself had no regrets about the decision made.

To this group for the first time I expressed some of the things that haunted me: 'Where had they put my baby? – it must have been flushed down a drain – it should have had a grave, but that's impossible – did it have a soul and where is it? – will it be born again or have I killed it forever? – will it return to me as another child? – does it know what I did?'

Understanding that I needed more than two day's help, my GP referred me to an NHS psychiatrist. With her help I came to realise that because I had managed to cope with destroying my child I wanted to punish myself by finally wrecking that control and to suffer getting pregnant again. And of course I was still looking for that lost child.

To her I owe a debt I can't repay. She helped me to help myself, which is what counselling and psychotherapy are all about. I stopped being self-destructive. Each time I've talked about it in the last four and a half years a little bit of me has healed. A friend, I discovered, had been through two. And now I have a partner who is remarkably sensitive and supportive. If I became pregnant I would be overjoyed to have his child but in any case I could not part with another.

The title of this piece has a bitter edge but is in fact true. That lost son or daughter would be four years old and would not have had the life it deserved. I strongly encourage anyone to do the the same as I did, but please find a way of dealing with the grief. Don't punish yourself. Of course I knew what was sensible and practical for me when I gave my child away. But really when it comes down to it – well, I did it for love.□

Women wanting to contact the author for support may write to BI-MONTHLY. A book of women's experiences of abortion is published this month, for details see BOOKS IN BRIEF.

HEALTH NEWS

African AIDS virus evades blood tests

A new AIDS virus is developing on the west African coast which is so different from the original central African version that it may evade existing blood tests. The new virus which was identified in patients in France and Spain is likely to spread.

There are over 20,000 infected people in the UK, and the proportion of those who will develop AIDS is rising to 14% in Britain and 34% in a US survey. The British Government was urged by specialists at a recent Royal Society Symposium to intensify the public health campaign in the face of increasing numbers of AIDS cases. A grant for funding of an education campaign by the Terrence Higgins Trust was refused by the Government.

Meanwhile news of a prospective treatment has increased share values of its inventor Wellcome. However nothing is known yet about long-term toxidity of the new drug.□ ○

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Why didn't you say

Al Benson on the dynamics of leaderless groups

Illustration by Sally de Holt

I'm becoming increasingly aware that there are a number of concepts, phrases and even words which I and others with a similar social or political background commonly use that mean nothing to the vast majority of people. These include such terms as 'CR groups', 'affinity groups', 'group dynamics', 'facilitator' and 'vibes'. Many were coined to provide alternatives to the alienating, hierarchical structure that has survived for so long, in left politics as much as anywhere else. And yet, in naming and living with our own concepts, we are in danger of creating an equally alienating situation, where power is held by those who are in the know, and where others, denied such knowledge, can only follow.

This is the reason I have written this article and I hope for a renewed discussion and increased sharing of this subject. Everything I write about here can be said to come under the broad term of Group Dynamics - how a group is structured and why, how people relate to each other within the group and so on . My basic position is that I am against hierarchically structured groups in which power is held by one or a few individuals, and that I am in favour of small leaderless groups in which power and responsibility are held equally by all members. I believe that this is the only way in which individuals can reach their full potential and learn to take responsibility for their own lives.

However small it is, a leaderless group can never be unstructured. Whenever a group of people are together for a particular purpose a structure will be formed, whether consciously (formal) or unconsciously (informal). I believe it is important that such a structure-forming be conscious, because if it is not then it is easy for certain people to have power over others, whether because they have greater knowledge, are more articulate, or because of social conditioning - watch for the subconscious assumption that men's opinions hold more weight than women's in a mixed group.

Making a structure formal does not necessarily mean that people have set roles within a group, although there are a number of alternative roles that have been experimented with over the recent years. The most common of these is the Facilitator, a person, rotating within an on-going group, whose job it is to watch the dynamics of the group and to help a meeting run smoothly, make necessary decisions etc. I find such a person invaluable in a situation where a number of items have to be covered in one meeting. Where a meeting is more flexible a facilitator might not be necessary unless the group is over a certain size. In small groups it is easier - with practice - for everyone to be aware of what is going on - who keeps butting in, who has been trying to say something for the last five minutes - and to help to even things out. This can add to the feeling of personal responsibility for a group in all its members.

The most important thing in leaderless groups is that everyone knows why they are there. For instance if it is a discussion group it is no good people thinking that theirs is the only opinion worth listening to, or, alternatively, that they are there to listen to an 'expert'. If you are in a group trying to make a particular point about something, try not to let your personal feelings about the person who made the proposal cloud your response.

A few pointers for good group dynamics:

If you want an open, personal discussion keep the numbers down, in my experience ten is a maximum. If you have more than ten people all wanting to talk about the same subject, split the group in two.

Always sit in a circle. It's amazing how much difference people's physical positionings make to the feel of a group. If someone is sitting apart they will end up either feeling outcast or unwittingly take on the role of a leader. However much effort it takes, adjust your positions when someone new comes in or they'll feel shut out for the rest of the meeting.

A good way to start a group meeting, especially with people who don't know each other very well, is to go round the circle giving each person a chance to say something. This can range from their name and why they are there to their immediate impressions of the subject at hand. Once everyone has said something, however short, they will find it much easier to talk once the subject is 'opened up'. But don't force someone to speak - they won't come again!

Be aware of silence. There are two basic types: the buzzing, profound silence when people have been made to think, or even a pause is needed before a new sub-

>

so?

ject is opened up; and the awkward, shifting silence when no-one can think of anything to say. It's easy to tell which is which. Anyone committed to the progress of a group will let the first type continue as long as it needs to, but will break the second by any means possible, even if it means saying something controversial to stir things up!

A growing number of techniques and games, all basically non-competitive in outlook, are being developed for use in small groups. For instance, in a new group, start off with a name game, such as throwing a ball from person to person in the circle, saying the name of the person you are throwing it to, until all the names have been learnt. Other, more active games can liven a group up at the start of a meeting or give a break from tension half-way through. In a group where everyone has the tendency to talk at once, try the 'conch shell' technique, believed to have been developed by the American Indians. Choose an object and agree on a rule that you can only speak when you hold it in your hand and that you must wait until the previous person has finished before taking it yourself.

The idea of the small, leaderless group became popular with the resurgence of feminism, and the growth of the women's consciousness-raising (CR) groups. It was taken up by anarchists and the peace movement - small affinity groups relating together through a network or web structure - and has now become common in many other groupings. If they don't work, if they are being used as the basis for someone's ego-trip or power-ploy, or if information is insufficiently shared, they can be a disaster. But if they work, if everyone present is putting energy and commitment into the situation, then the result is a creative, positive energy that cannot, I believe be found anywhere else.

Amongst the useful books on the subject are: The Communal Housing Handbook by Sarah Eno & Dave Treanor; The Tyranny of Structurelessness by Jo Freeman; The Tyranny of Tyranny by Cathy Levine; In Our Own Hands by Lucy Goodison & Sheila Ernst; Growth Games by Harold Lewis & Harold Streitfield.

The author is a member of the Bisexual Group in London and is one of the organisers of the National Conference on Bisexuality.

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Since early last year a London self-help group has been helping people who have been given a positive result in the HTLV3 antibody test. JONATHAN GRIMSHAW describes their work.

Being HTLV-3 'antibodypositive' means that you have, statistically, a one in ten chance of developing AIDS and it means that you are probably infectious; even if you don't develop AIDS yourself, you could infect someone else with the virus through certain kinds of sex, and they could get AIDS.

Discovering that you are antibody positive can be psychologically devastating. During the past year Body Positive has grown into a broad-based support and advisory association whose main aim is to help people come to terms successfully with the psychological and practical implications of having HTLV-3.

It does this through telephone, face-to-face and group counselling, through support groups and through social groups. Body Positive also sponsors a number of groups and activities designed to help people improve their own health and, in doing so, to minimise as far as possible their chances of developing AIDS.

Through counselling we offer advice and information about all aspects of HTLV-3; we help people to overcome their anxieties about how HTLV-3 will affect their health, their sex lives, their present and future relationships. We offer advice on who to tell, how to tell them, how to approach safer sex, how to ask someone for safer sex. Body Positive is comprised almost entirely of people who are themselves HTLV-3 antibody positive, so their advice is based on personal and practical experience.

The aim of the social activities we organise is to overcome the sense of isolation, of being a 'social leper, felt by many people who are antibody positive. We do this by providing a 'safe' environment where HTLV-3 is out in the open and where you do not have to put up barriers to conceal the fact that you are antibody positive because you are frightened of how people will react.

It is also an environment where the idea of protecting your own health, and the health of other people, is very important. It's sometimes an idea to which surprisingly little importance is attached in the wider community.

It is easy for the knowledge that you have HTLV-3 to undermine your self-esteem, to make you afraid for the future and to make you feel that you have no control over what happens to you. At the heart of everything that Body Positive does is the knowledge that through helping ourselves and by giving each other emotional support and encouragement, our self-esteem, confidence and the value we place on our own and other people's lives is enhanced immeasurably. Those are the qualities a person needs if he, or she, is to cope successfully with being antibody-positive.☐

BODY POSITIVE can be contacted by writing to Body Positive BM AIDS London WC1N 3XX.
If you have found out that you are antibody-positive and would like to talk to a BODY POSITIVE counsellor, you should telephone: Terrence Higgins Trust AIDS Helpline 01-833 2971, Lesbian & Gay Switchboard 01-837 7324 (7-10pm), or London Friend 01-359 7371 (7.30-10pm) and ask for the BODY POSITIVE counsellor.

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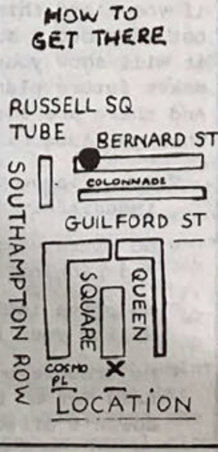

HTLV3

MATT MILNE talks to Leslie Glover, Senior Health Advisor at a London STD clinic, to find our more about the implications for bisexual men of the HTLV3 test.

James Pringle House is the STD Clinic for the Middlesex Hospital London. Recommended by Lesbian & Gay Switchboard, this annexe is the centre for HTLV3 testing in London. It was here that I met Leslie Glover, who is the Senior Health Advisor for Sexually Transmitted Diseases, in her office on the fourth floor at the end of a narrow corridor.

Ms Glover's job involves counselling people who have sexually transmitted conditions >

guidelines

Top doctors believe that Hepatitis B can be eradicated from this country in our lifetime. But this fight is being hampered by restrictive Department of Health guidelines on the use of the vaccine against the disease.

Health officials are drawing up new guidelines and doctors hope that these will allow the vaccine to be promoted and made available to groups particularily at risk. These groups include gay and bisexual men and their sexual partners.

The vaccine, which was developed in the late 70s, has proved to be highly effective. The manufacturers have overcome early production difficulties and the supply is now more than adequate to meet the needs of high risk groups.

Hepatitis B is a severe viral infection which can have a number of serious long-term effects on the liver, such as cirrhosis (rotting away of the liver) and >

testing and bisexual men

such as gonorrhea, syphilis, and now HTLVIII. I asked her how accurate the test for the presence of the virus was. 'The test itself,' she said, 'is very accurate, with very few false results. But people are recommended to take the test twice, with a three or four month gap in between, because in certain circumstances, in the early months after the initial infection or as the immune system fails, the virus may be present without there being antibodies produced. In those cases a negative test result would not mean that the person is non-infectious.'

And who would know the results of the test? The results, Leslie Glover says, are confidential to the Pringle House system. GPs are not notified and no outside doctors, not even those working at Middlesex Hospital have access to those records. Had the BMA directive permitting GPs to inform partners of HTLVIII-positive patients affected her work? She emphasized that the policy here was to encourage the infectious partner to tell the other, but never to reveal the fact without the patient's consent. For bisexual men living in a heterosexual relationship the problem is magnified when the lover/wife is unaware of their gay affairs. Leslie Glover has counselled those men who will not tell their wives to have safe sex, but most eventually do bring it out in the open. An additional disadvantage is the imbalance in information available to the gay community on one side and heterosexual society on the other. Gay and bisexual men are now mostly aware of the facts concerning AIDS, can discuss safe sex and can be supportive of a friend who is antibody-positive. For isolated bisexual men who may not have this network, just wives who may be at risk and only aware of the media-led hysteria - a bad situation.

The effect of the HTLV3 virus has been to push people into coming out, into entering the gay world where they can find support and into making decisions about life styles which they did not have to make previously.

For an antibody-positive man or woman children are out. Few children of HTLV3-positive women live very long, and a man risks infecting the woman as well as the unborn child. For a young couple with a permanent relationship this would rule out any children. Thus guilt becomes a problem in the relationship. For the woman this might be around deciding whether to stay in the relationship or to leave him. For the man the chance of passing on the disease.

I mentioned the similarity in position of married bisexual men and haemophiliacs - who are of course all male. Leslie Glover spoke of how well The Haemophilia Society was helping its members with HTLV3, though she had not worked with anyone who was HTLV3-positive as a result of a blood transfusion. She went on to talk about the need to educate people about the real risks of infection and to counteract the hysteria generated so far.

The decision to take the HTLV3 test must be a personal one. For some people it is good to find out the facts, but not for all. As bisexuals there are additional reasons why the test is important, especially if children are planned and if we have heterosexual lovers.□

'I feel a sense of relief at having taken the test and being able to plan my life better from the knowledge of being antibody-negative. I found the experience helpful. But we must all decide for ourselves.'

hamper fight against Hepatitis B

liver cancer.

One in ten people who pick up the virus may go on to be a chronic carrier who can pass on the disease to other people. And the virus is very easily transmissible(ten times more easily than HTLV3,the AIDS virus).

There are thought to be 200 million carriers throughout the world,heavily concentrated in the far east and parts of Africa. But there are 100,00 new cases diagnosed every year in Western Europe.And this is thought to be just the tip of an iceberg of silent carriers.

The disease can take a number of courses.Fulminant Hepatitis leads to complete liver failure and is fatal in 50 per cent of cases with in four or five days.Injections of immunoglobulin may help to fight off the disease and women have a much better chance of survival than men. But fortunately fulminant Hepatitis occurs in only one in every 1,ooo cases.

A severe attack of acute Hepatitis B involves a severe inflammation of the liver within 12 weeks of infection. The sufferer is jaundiced,feverish very tired and unable to work. The skin will be itchy,the stools light-coloured and the urine dark. The patient will be depressed and feel generally very ill because important functions of the liver have been disrupted. Ten per cent of patients have to be hospitalised and some never recover a complete sense of well being.

The illness lasts about ten days but it can take up to six moths to feel strong again.

A less severe attack of acute Hepatitis B can bring on flu-like symptoms - fever,loss of appetite and weight and long-lasting fatigue. Alternatively,in perhaps 50 per cent of cases,the symptoms can be very mild and may go unnoticed.Even when a patient has marked symptoms doctors may fail to correctly diagnose the disease.

After six months 5 to 10 per cent of all sufferers will have failed to get rid of the virus and will become carriers.This is more likely if the initial symptoms have been mild.

In a case of chronic persistent Hepatitis the liver usually recovers even though the virus is still in the body.And it is unlikely that the virus will be transmitted to others.

But chronic active Hepatitis leads to long-term ill health,weakness and lethargy. Between 10 and 25 per cent of carriers will die from severe bleeding and liver failure caused by cirrhosis.And there is a higher than normal chance of developing cancer of the liver. Next issue - the new guidelines?

DAVID SMITH

Do you come here often?

All you need is a home computer and your telephone and you could be talking to hundreds of gay people without leaving your living room. Will this be the end of the chat at the bar?

Using your phone, modem, home computer and television it is possible to communicate with a distant main frame computer to interrogate its memory banks for information. British Telecom have been running a service called Prestel, which consists of a network of computers which can be chatted to from every home in the UK via a telephone. Over the last five years the numbers of people chatting to the Prestel computers has increased - slowly at first, rapidly in the last year. Recent developments have meant a quick fall in the price of modems and computers capable of being connected to Prestel. There are plans to give away modems and computers for free and charge people only for the time they are connected to the system. The growth in this type of technology will follow the pattern found when Video was introduced. Seven years ago hardly anyone had a video recorder, now 15% of homes have one.

So much for the technology - but what has all this to do with gay society? The simple answer to this is that gay people, mainly male are the largest identifiable group who use Prestel for non-business use. As one friend put it, 'Gays are taking over Prestel.'

This has come as a big embarrassment to British Telecom and plans are being formulated to isolate the gays on Prestel. This is going to be done by making the gay Prestel community a Closed User Group, with the gay information stored on the computer only accessible to people who identify themselves to the computer as gay first.

There are about 65,000 people connected to the Prestel system, half business and half of them home users. Of the home users most of them belong to a sub-group called Micronet. Most of the gays belong to Micronet and recent estimates suggest that 4,000 gay people in the UK are using the system. Daily there may be as many as 500 gays using Micronet, with the highest intensity of usage in the late evening when they leave the clubs. There seem to be three main uses by gay people:

1) to just chat one to one via the computer's mailbox facility, with messages flashed up on the screen at their homes.

2) to chat to the whole Prestel gay community via the Chat Line - in this case one's message can be seen by the entire community at once (typically 300 people).

3) to gain information from the various 'pages' available. Here, 'page' describes what one sees on the home computer screen when browsing through Prestel. There are 340,000 pages in total and approximately 150 for gay information.

If you want any particular information you have to dial up the relevant page number. Important pages for gays or lesbians are:

Gay Advice 323000145, Flipper 32300005, Man Around (international gay guide) 546666.

Any person or organisation can put information onto Prestel. Typically the cost is £25 per year for each page of 16 lines by 40 characters including graphics if necessary. Users come across your pages via 'routes' from the central index. As you move further into the system you can work your way to a required subject. To reach the gay information takes five choices from page 1, the index page.

Prestel is open to all, but its main intention is to act as an information bureau which can have its details updated instantly by anyone connected to the system. Already high street banks, travel agents, and industry are beginning to realise the potential of systems like Prestel. As yet, non-business use has only just begun. With world-wide communications being made available to Prestel users via the telex network, the future looks exciting.□

Rachel O'Connor

London
Lesbian & Gay Switchboard
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24 HOUR INFORMATION & ADVICE FOR LESBIANS & GAY MEN

The front cover picture of a Woodabe during the geerewol dance is taken from NOMADS OF THE NIGER by Carol Beckwith & Marion van Offelen (Collins).

Q. Why is

Twenty years ago androgyny was a fringe subject, studied almost exclusively by specialist psychologists and psychiatrists; today it enjoys greater respect. The meaning of the term is a state in which male and female characteristics are present at the same time in a living thing.

The phenomenon is quite common in plants, less so in insects and animals.

When describing animals, in particular humans, the term is divided into two types, one referring to anatomy and the other to behaviour. Throughout history, great interest has been paid to individuals who have been born hermaphrodite, those whose anatomy carries both breast and penis. Many religions incorporate the concept of androgyny, and in many cultures hermaphrodites have enjoyed great respect.

In our culture, however, the emphasis has been placed on the physiological type, while behavioural androgyny has not been accepted. Gradually this situation is changing as an understanding of the human mind reveals new perspectives.

The basic issue which androgyny raises is; can the mental state overrule the body? Put another way, is gender (maleness or femaleness) more important than sex (man or woman)? The androgynous person in some way answers this question, since by >

Joys and

DAVID SMITH on a recent survey of readers of a lesbian magazine.

An astonishing 48% of readers surveyed by CONTACT - the lesbian news and review magazine - have made a suicide attempt at one time. And 48% have consulted a professional counsellor at some point in their lives.

Contact asked its readers to complete a questionaire at the end of last year and the results are analysed in detail in the latest two issues of the magazine. Of the 670 women who responded 163 (24%) said their sexuality was best described as bisexual, 456 (68%) were lesbian, 17 (3%) celibate and 34 (5%) undefined.

Most of the women's suicide >

androgyny like the Berlin Wall?

exhibiting both male and female characteristics, he/she shows that the difference between the sexes is not so great.

The androgyne troubles the sexual sectarianism which exists at present between men and women. For anyone who wants this division maintained, androgynous people are a real threat.

Analysis of European male and female gender identities, used against 1974 male / female gender criterna, shows a gradual change in womens' sexuality definition. Early studies in the seventies predicted a shift in womens' self definition, with approximately 15% completely transgressing their defined role. Subsequently this figure was reduced to 10%, due to economic factors attenuating the change. Male sex role definition over the same period has not changed.

One cosequence of this has been to make male/female gender definitions much easier to transgress by either sex. So simply put, it has become easier to be androgynous, psychologically androgynous that is.

Throughout history, great interest has been paid to individuals who have been born hermaphrodite. Many religions incorporate the concept of androgyny, and in many cultures hermaphrodites have enjoyed respect

Another prediction, based on empirical data, shows that sporting achievement is becoming more equally balanced between the sexes. Women will be reaching records in the olympics equal to men by the 1990's. Does this show the emergence of a physiological form of androgyny? It may be difficult for the olympic authorities to define gender by that stage.

What of the 'new' man, will he be weaker? Not if the 'other' men have their way, it can be assumed.

The difference between male and female androgyny is a bit like the Berlin Wall. In the West, we can go right up to the wall and look over to the East. On the communist side, an East Berliner would not get within 100 yards of the wall. Male sexuality is like that East Berliner; if you try and cross the male/female divide you will be penalised, whereas women can view and experiment with 'maleness'.

Feminist androgyny today is well respected as a counter to the destructive 'feminine' sex role stereotype. Feminists argue that the sex roles ar male constructs imposed on women by men, and then alienate themselves from men for this reason. This is a mistake, since not all men approve of the existing roles. Male androgynes make the same 'anti-statement' about their assigned gender as women. To continue the Berlin Wall metaphor, the 'western' women should encourage dissidents in the communist block, rather than exclude them. We don't shoot East Berliners running towards the Wall.

Future blurring of gender role definitions, though predicted by many sociologists, will probably occur in a disguise not recognisable to the older generation. The approval of the older generation will have a delaying effect on any changes in sex typing.

Next issue I will be discussing what form this gender blurring will take, and the effect this will have on gay a and straight sexuality.

Rachel O'Connor.

problems of bisexual women

attempts came during adolescence, particularly during a major identity crisis. Other reasons given included broken relationships, physical or verbal abuse, rejection by family and friends, and loneliness.

On a more positive note the magazine reveals that 47% of its respondents have come out to both friends and relatives. Only 8% have not come out at all.

"It wasn't so hard coming out to my friends as they were all fairly liberal about homosexuality," said one woman. "Some of them were a bit turned off, but most of them stood by me. Coming out to my parents however was a completely different story."

Another respondent wrote: "For me it was never a problem. I think I came out when I was about thirteen, and I presented myself in a very positive manner, being bloody sure nobody was going to put me down. I suppose it did cost me most of my friends, but in the long run they weren't real friends anyway."

On the subject of bisexuality Contact says that theoretically bisexuality would seem the ideal and natural sexuality. "Most of the time however it remains invisible, with the general opinion that sexuality only falls into two categories. Anyone who happens to fall in between is greeted with disbelief or with the understanding that they are still on the way to 'finding themselves'. It is very rarely considered that men and women have the capability to accommodate sexual relationships with either sex and that most people do so anyway at some point in their lives."

"I got married when I was 23 and never thought anything about women until I became involved with a very close friend," said one bisexual woman. "In re-assessing myself I was inclined to label myself a lesbian, but deep down I knew that I wasn't. I still love my husband very much, it's just that I like women too."

Another bisexual woman wrote: "It was all very confusing at first. It had taken me so long to define myself as a lesbian and I was shattered to realise that maybe I wasn't after all."

Heterosexuals rarely differentiate between bisexuality and homosexuality, says Contact. And bisexual women have to face the same prejudices as lesbians. "But bisexual women also provoke an unfair distrust from the lesbian community who choose to disassociate themselves from women who are 'really gay' but can't cope witht the stigmas attached or who sleep with women ' just to be trendy'."□

CONTACT nos 12 & 13 are available from bookshops or c/o 11a Forth St Edinburgh EH1 3LE, price 75p each.

Time waits for no man

After seven years and thirteen script rewrites, Derek Jarman's obsession reaches the screen, and it proves to be a masterpiece. Probably one of the best British films in recent years CARAVAGGIO has everything - a terrific plot, gorgeous people, luscious scenes and memorable lines.

MARK SIMPSON on the film made for £500,000 in an Isle-of-Dogs warehouse.

Much more than you could imagine - Tilda Swinton as Lena

In virtually every way possible CARAVAGGIO is more than just a bio-pic. The life of this revolutionary sixteenth century Italian painter has fascinated Jarman so much and for so long - the British Film Institute has taken six years to come up with the miserly sum, during which time Jarman made no feature films at all - that this picture has become a passionate, yet often strangely cold-blooded fusion of Jarman's dreams and the painter's artistic significance.

Very little is known about the life of this painter, except that he killed someone called Ranuccio Thomasoni. Recently it has been discovered that in the blood below the severed head of 'St. John', his favourite work, are written the words 'I, Caravaggio, did this'. It is around this discovery and a personal interpretation of the other paintings - Jarman is a painter turned film director - that the plot of the film crystallises.

The story itself is narrated through the agitations of the dying Caravaggio's mind. Fleeing justice and exhausted by his art, he lies, gripped by fever, in a bleak stone room near the sea.

The film opens with the young Caravaggio as a vicious rent-boy painter, taken under the wing by a sugar-daddy Cardinal, after selling him a painting in return of his illegal knife - on which is written No Hope, No Fear. This nihilist motif proves to be Caravaggio's guiding darkness, whilst the symbolic exchange of his art for his knife with the Cardinal sets the tone of his future relationship with the Church.

Ranuccio is the painter's male model cum rent-boy, rent that is without any sex. It is Ranuccio who eventually becomes besotted with Caravaggio and kills his ex-girl friend Lena out of love for the artist. However, Caravaggio has himself fallen for Lena and is compelled, on discovery of Ranuccio's guilt, to slit his throat with the famous knife.

Inasmuch as any film can be said to be bisexual, CARAVAGGIO is very much so. So much that Jarman has come in for criticism from sections of the gay 'old guard' for not making it a truly gay film. At the same time, The Standard's film critic writes about the 'film's gay primping and preening' and The Guardian calls a 'travesty' the suggestion that Caravaggio was gay. In the end, of course, Jarman is the winner, since the invective he provokes is a measure of his success and especially because he nearly always manages to persuade his opponents to floor themselves by opening their mouths. He clearly relishes his ursurpation of the old bisexual conundrum - howls of 'betrayal' from one side and screams of 'homosexual nonsense' from the other.

The films itself is a series of tableaux, each one meticulously arranged and lit to evoke the spirit of the paintings. Blank rooms and draped sheets create a space of darkness and light through which the figures proceed and recede. Electric lights, pocket calculators, typewriters and the noise of steam trains serve not only to amuse - for this film is often humorous, despite and because of its intensity - but also to jolt the viewer from the sleepy relegation of the film to a distant century. The most telling scene, however, is the audience between Caravaggio and the Pope: it is the crux of Caravaggio's relationship with the Church and Jarman's with the Establishment in general and the BFI in particular. It is no idle joke that Jarman is seen in the background of this scene as a priest performing Mass.

CARAVAGGIO's eminent success on a miniscule budget, coming as it does in the midst of multi-million Frankensteins such as Revolution and Absolute Beginners, is a revolutionary gesture in itself. It is a film about the assimilation of protest and revolt, the complementary roles of antagonistic forces and 'the transformation of sinners into saints' (Jarman). Caravaggio is not intended to be a likeable person - he is a criminal, a murderer and an artist. But most importantly, he is not a victim.□

Actor and Martyr – a life

Jean Genet, the controversial French novelist died in April aged 76.

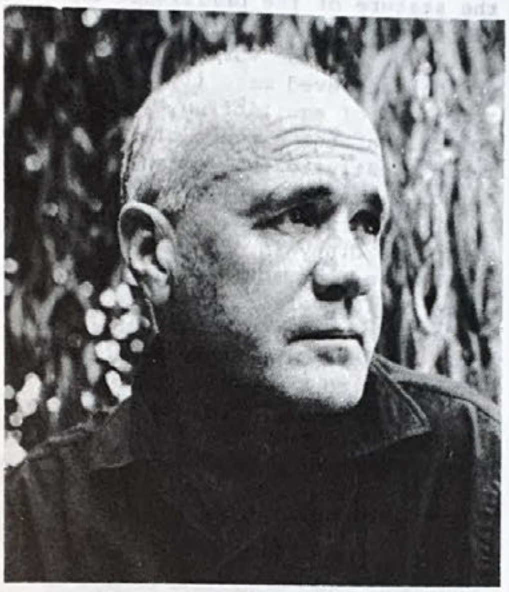
Appreciation by Eugene O'Neil. Photo by Jerry Bauer.

He showed us an insider's view of the sordid underworld of European society. The brothels, gambling dens, cafés and seedy tenements of the ports, the sailors hostels and the prisons where his brilliantly realised characters demonstrated that there is no true happiness in life yet a contentment in having one's will.

His vision was by no means universal, his oeuvre lacks a fully realised female character; but sad, violent larcenous men, heroic or cowardly, and usually doomed, sparkle and scintillate with all the complexity of the human soul.

Feelings and states of mind were his forté. Witness the harrowing, vivid, and intense half hour you spend with a burglar as he thrills to the power rush of invading another's home - opening drawers, touching things - prowling.

Masterpieces of description stud his work like jewels. The excitement created by the way a



boy's trouser leg clings to the curve of his calf, the erotic terror of an endless hour spent inserting a hand into the crotch of a sleeping Nazi - the flood of lustful joy when it encounters a hard cock and the fully conscious soldier's fantasy of a girl going down on him.

Murder and the murderous fascinated him. In the criminal hierarchy none stand higher. And the penultimate murder, that of the murderer himself on the bed of Madame la Guillotine with all it's horific ceremonial; this pro-mortem ritual apotheosized the murderer like a profane canonization. Our own Dr Johnson said, nothing focuses the mind like the certain knowledge of being hanged in the morning, and Genet was there to ducument that focusing.

The tatooed fascists, the sensual psychopaths, and the hot and simple innocents, driven into crime by a world too 'other' to be endured; all will live in literature as mirrors for man's soul. For the sordid and the base were made by him into poetry and that is the true measure of the artist.■

'There doesn't seem to be a word for having relationships with people.'

Pete Shelley, erstwhile member of the punk band Buzzcocks, identifies as bisexual in an interview with Kris Kirk in the May issue of Gay Times. '....though I don't mind the word bisexual at all, I'm aware that to some people it conjures up sex rather than anything to do with feelings. There does not seem to be a word for having relationships with people' he says.

A new album of lovelorn songs will follow his latest single 'Waiting for Love'.

Pete Shelley will be appearing at the Shaw Theatre, Euston Road, London, on Thursday 3rd July, with Erazure, Go Go Boys and the Frank Chickens, as part of the Gay Pride Week celebrations.

SINGLE ISSUES OF GAY TIMES ARE AVAILABLE @ £1.35 EACH INCL. P.+P. FROM G.T. SUBS DEPT., 283 CAMDEN HIGH STREET, LONDON NW1 7BX. CHEQUE PAYABLE TO MILLIVRES LTD.

Fay Presto, onetime LBC activist, now transsexual magicienne supreme, is also taking part in the Gay Pride Celebrations; 20th July at the Edinburgh Assembly Rooms, Albany Empire, Deptford and Friday 4th July at the Shaw Theatre, Euston Road, London with Bernard Padden and a host of other gay stars.

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BOOKS IN BRIEF

QUEER IN MEXICO

Unpublished for three decades QUEER by William Burroughs is now available (Picador, £8.95). A trip from Mexico to South America and back with a young man - this and much more.

WOLFF ON HIRSCHFELD

Charlotte Wolff, author of the classic BISEXUALITY has resurfaced with a massive new study of Magnus Hirschfeld, who pioneered research into homosexuality in Germany in the early part of this century until the Nazis burnt down his research centre in the 1930s.

MEDITATION ON DEATH

MISHIMA: A VISION OF THE VOID (Aidan Ellis, £10.50) is Marguerite Yourcenar's appraisal of Yukio Mishima, the celebrated Japanese novelist who committed ritual suicide in 1970 after a failed attempt at a military coup. Ms Yourcenar's essay is a literary study but also a meditation on death and the codes of honour and how a man comes to terms with both his craft and his conscience. "It is always difficult to judge a great contemporary writer," she writes. "We lack the necessary distance. Even more difficult is to judge him if he belongs to a culture other than our own, a culture tainted by our attraction to or distrust of the exotic."

WOMEN'S PRESS

Gerd Brantenberg (author of 'The Daughters of Egalia'; Women's Press, £2.95) has translated her own novel WHAT COMES NATURALLY which has been a cult in Scandinavia since it was first published in 1973. The book describes the predicament of being homosexual in a heterosexual world, of growing up a "lesbian in disguise" and coming out in the end.

Also from Women's Press comes MEMOIRS FROM THE WOMEN'S PRISON by Nawal el Sa'adawi (£3.95), a leading Egyptian feminist, sociologist, doctor and novelist who was imprisoned under President Sadat because of her political activities.

And in July Women's Press are publishing a first novel by Caeia March. THREE PLAY YARN (£3.95) tells of the realities of working-class lesbian experience. Three women growing up in the Blitz take their different paths. Lotte marries for money, Esther seeks education and politics, Dee loves women and learns through her relationship with her lover's black daughter about an oppression different from her own.

The morning after

Victoria Mathews on the latest novel by the author of 'Kinflicks'

Lisa Alther's new novel is utterly personal and on a different scale altogether from her earlier works. OTHER WOMEN (Penguin £2.95) hasn't the stature or the brilliance of 'Kinflicks'. It is a wise and gentle book: the work of someone who has achieved maturity and some kind of equilibrium, possibly at the expense of the intense creativity that often arises out of living painfully.

Caroline is the main character who, like Ginny in 'Kinflicks', has sampled conventional married life, child bearing anl opting out. She is an ordinary and likeable woman without Ginny's intellectual edge. The book opens with Caroline living with her lover Diana and both their children from previous marriages. They are both nurses, spending day after day patching up victims of male violence.

There is a crisis in the relationship between the two women: Diana has opted out sexually while wanting to go on living with Caroline. There is a sense that their involvement is too deep and all embracing to cope with. Both being women and in a caring profession , the couple find themselves carrying their nurturing instincts to ludicrous extremes - each struggling to out-nurture the other. The situation is poignant and funny - and all too credible - raising inevitable questions about women's self esteem generally.

Caroline decides to go into therapy to help her through this impasse. Hannah is the therapist who has a reputation around town for being some kind of Wonder Woman. The book traces the mutually rewarding relationship that develops through Caroline's therapy. Caroline is gay; Hannah is straight. They come from very different backgrounds and life experiences. But there is more common ground than both at first imagine. Alther quietly observes the mutual respect and affection that grows into a strong bond between the two women.

There are two points which emerge from the book that particularly interest me. One is the tendency we all have of repeating unhealthy emotional patterns which are fixed very early in our lives. Although we learn something from each variation on the action replay of our involvements, we can only really develop and progress when we have recognised our particular patterns and can break and modify them.

The other interesting point is the way we often externalise our own inner state and so avoid facing ourselves. Caroline dwells on universal human suffering, using it as an excuse for the depression she is really feeling about her own personal pain. It is an effective ploy: nobody can deny the existence of universal human suffering. But depression is debilitating and helps no-one - least of all the suffering millions. Much better to tackle your own problems before you start on other peoples'.

Caroline therapy also leads her to explore her bisexuality. In terms of sex pure and simple, heterosexuality and homosexuality both have their own charms but for Caroline the morning after is the test which proves that her emotional ties lie with women.

OTHER WOMEN explores interesting areas of emotion and experience. There are no instant answers; just an honest attempt to reveal more about ourselves. It's entertaining too; Alther's wit still sparkles and she remains, for me, the all-time mistress of bathos.

Two lives to lead

BISEXUALITIES:THEORY AND RESEARCH,the book we mentioned in the last two issues of BI-MONTHLY, is now available at the much cheaper price of £8.95.

This collection of essays is edited by Fritz Klein,author of THE BISEXUAL OPTION, and Timothy Wolf.

The book,now appearing under the titleTWO LIVES TO LEAD,is very much the product of work in departments of psychology and sociology at universities in the U.S. But beneath the jargon there are very important conclusions about definitions of bisexuality and about women and men in marriages.

TWO LIVES TO LEAD is one of the first books published by Harrington Park Press which aims to produce low-cost paperbacks on sexuality and popular psychology.

Essays on bisexuality also appear in the Press's GAY PERSONALITY AND SEXUAL LABELLING (£5.95) and ORIGINS OF SEXUALITY AND HOMOSEXUALITY(£6.95).

All three books are available from Gay's The Word Bookshop, 66 Marchmont St,London WC1N 1AB or direct from Harrington Park Press,3 Henrietta St,London WC2E 8LU.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Blond bisexual jock

Johnnie Ray Russeau, a not-so-goodlooking American black gay has wanted to be a singer ever since his mother Clara started to regale him with endless stories about music. Like did you know that the group called the Crystals on "He's A Rebel" wasn't The Crystals at all but Darlene Love ("with whom Clara had sung in church choirs not so many years before") over-dubbed four or five times? EIGHT DAYS A WEEK is a bouncy, bright love and success story by Larry Duplechan (Alyson Publications, distr. by GMP, £4.95). Will Johnnie make it to the top? Will he find happiness with Keith Keller, a six-foot-two blond bisexual ex-football jock who works in a bank?

OPEN MARRIAGES

Violet Trefusis was the lover of Vita Sackville-West whose open bisexual marriage to MP Harold Nicholson was the subject of the classic 'Portrait of a Marriage'. A novel by Trefusis written in French over half a century ago, BRODERIE ANGLAISE, has just been translated into English and is published by Methuen at £8.95.

VIOLET TREFUSIS: A Biography by Phillipe Julian & John Philips has also just been re-issued.

Another open marriage, that of Jane and Paul Bowles, is aired in OUT IN THE WORLD, a selection of Jane's letters, 1935-70, chosen by Millicent Dillon.

NEW FROM PENGUIN

Penguin have just published two noteworthy biographies - COLETTE by Allan Massie (£2.95) and WALT WHITMAN: THE MAKING OF A POET by Paul Zweig (£4.96). And just when Michael Foucault's second volume of 'The History of Sexuality' appears for the first time in English, Penguin gives us THE FOUCAULT READER, an introduction to his thought edited by Paul Rabinow (£5.95).

Lesbians in literature

LESBIANS IN LITERATURE AND HISTORY is the title of a new book on lesbian history, literature and sexuality, edited by Monika Kehoe (Harrington Park Press, £8.95).

Angela Neustatter, together with Gina Newson, has written MIXED FEELINGS - THE EXPKRIENCE OF ABORTION, in which women and men talk about the effect on their lives (Pluto, £3.50). One of the titles chosen for Feminist Book Fortnight.

Big names for cultural review

Plans for a major new venture in the world of gay publishing have been announced. THE EUROPEAN GAY REVIEW will aim to meet a perceived need for a heavy weight magazine covering the arts and current affairs from a male gay viewpoint.

The first issue of this quaterly is scheduled for September 1986 and distribution will cover most of the major European cities.

The editor and publisher is Salvatore Santagati who studied philosophy at University College London where he founded the University College London Arts Society. He is currently engaged in research at the London School of Economics and Political Science. In 1985 Mr Santagati devised and organised a major gay arts festival at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, The Gay Sensibility in the Arts. The series of discussions which formed the body of the festival brought together leading lesbian and gay writers, artists and musicians to assess the way in which homosexuality affects the artist's perception and output.

Mr Santagati will be supported by an advisory board which boasts an impressive array of novelists, journalists and academics from Britain, Europe and the USA. Board members include novelist Francis King, critic for the Sunday Telegraph and International President of PEN, and Nicholas de Jongh, The Guardian's Arts Correspondent and Theatre Critic. Contributions will also come from John Russel Taylor, editor of Films and Filming, novelist Edmund White, playwright Martin Sherman, author of 'Bent', music critic Hugh Canning, Anthony Coxon, Professor of Social Research a University College Cardiff, James Cummins, Emeritus Professor of Spanish and Latin American Studies at the University of London, Andrew Hodges, author of 'Alan Turing: The Enigma', and John Boswell Professor of History at Yale University.

THE EUROPEAN GAY REVIEW will cover all aspects of the arts, featuring reports from the major cultural festivals and in-depth book reviews by authoritative figures. Each issue will focus on a particular European artist, beginning with the erotic drawings of Michelangelo.

Current affairs coverage will be supported by interviews with leading European writers, artists and politicians, reports from both Eastern and Western countries and analysis of the achievements of pioneering homosexual rights activists, past and present. The editors promise literary articles on world-wide travel, and in the light of the current crisis caused by AIDS a regular section on health written by leading doctors and medical researchers.

Advance annual subscriptions (standard £10, support £25, student £8, institutions £25) from: The European Gay Review, BCM Box 8970, London WC1 3XX.

DAVID SMITH

Hamburgerised bureaucracy

"Hyenas are the greediest and the most ambitious of animals. HE is short for Hyena.... The squatters are the criminals, the ones who've been messing up the multi-national corporations in this country. Having found them out, having eradicated his enemies, having saved his multi-national corporation from decay and decadence, Hyena was now rich and secure, which is securely or doubly rich, in the Eyes of Our Good Lord."

Kathy Acker hates to be quoted out of context, but you have to start somewhere. True the mainstream media have always homed in on the sex in her writing and ignored the fact that it's about other things - not least poverty in a Reaganite, hamburgerised bureaucracy. The female knight in DON QUIXOTE, Acker's latest novel lives in such a world. Her companion is a dog. Hence the hyenas.

'She writes of an anxious and dangerous sexual existence beside which the violence of the 18th-century comic novel pales', said The London Review of Books. And as Kathy Acker herself proclaims: "A woman writing about sex is trouble to begin with, and if a woman does it from political or class questioning there's always trouble."

But she has very little sympathy with a fellow American, Andrea Dworkin who also has a new novel out - ICE AND FIRE. The book is a relentless tale of a woman's life-long experience of abuse, rape and brutalisation. And one of the author's real-life methods of trying to combat this has been to align herself with the right wing in America in a very strong anti-pornography lobby. "That issue I regarded as censorship", says Kathy Acker. "Whatever it says it's doing it works as political censorship and censorship against gays." DS

PRIDE FESTIVAL 86

Peter Shorey and Richard Sandells of Gay Sweatshop in COMPROMISED IMMUNITY, the first British play about AIDS, at the Albany Empire from 3 July - 'Needs to be seen', Terrence Higgins Trust.

At a time when the gay and lesbian community is under siege from hostile media and government, it is important to support gay and lesbian issues.

This year's Gay Pride Festival Presents this opportunity. It promises to be the best celebration ever, with events in Towns and Cities around Britain extending well beyond the official festival dates.

The festivities in many parts of the country will be well underway before the 17th festival is formally opened at the Grand Launch Party at Heaven in Londom on June 19th.

At 2pm on Saturday June 21st the national Lesbian Strength March will leave Speakers Corner in Hyde Park to make its way to the London Lesbian and Gay Centre for a day of activities.

The Pride 86 Carnival Parade at the end of the Festival starts from Speakers' Corner at 1pm on July 5th. An unlimited number of floats will mingle with thousands of marchers. They will witness a free concert given by The communards, and there will be a Cabaret Tent.

PRIDE 86 can be contacted via David Bunnet at 10 Arborfield, Islip Street, London NW5 2UD, telephone 01-482 2740.

JUNE

8 Kiss of the Spiderwoman, Ritzy Cinema.
13▼ Beauty and the Beast + Orphee + Le Testament D'Orphee; Ritzy Cinema.
Seduction: The Cruel Woman; Metro Cinema
14▼ The Times of Harvey Milk; Ritzy Cinema.
15▼ as 14; Ritzy;
Strange Love Affair + David Roche Talks To You About Love; Metro Cinema.
18▼ Jason & Medea; Oval House Theatre til 22.
19▼ Launch Party for 17th Pride Festival; Heaven.
Festival Programme out.
Coming Soon by Parker & Klein; Oval House Theatre til 29 (not 23-24).
Paradise Lost, poetry by Bradley + Young; Oval Hs.
Desperately Seeking Susan; Ritzy Cinema.
20▼ The Insinuendos Cabaret; Oval House Th.
Benefit at Frenklins.
Fay Presto at Greenwich Lesbian & Gay Show; Albany Empire.
21▼ Lesbian Strength March 2pm Speakers' Corner.
Farewell to Daddy by Joseph Healy; Oval House.
Lesbian & Gays in Art; Brixton Art Gallery til 12 Jly.
22▼ Born in Flames; Rio Cinema.
Mishima, Ritzy Cinema.
Poetry: Love's just a Lesbian by Rose Collis, Oval House Theatre.
Joseph Healy, poetry, Oval House Theatre.
23 ▼ Caravaggio, Rio Cinema.
Action Against Aids Benefit, Barbara Cook, Donmar Warehouse.
24 ▼ As 23; Rio.
Midsummer Night's dream Costume Extravaganza, Camden Palace.
25 ▼ Diane Biondo play, Oval House Theatre..
As 23, Rio.
Hackney Lesbian and Gay Group Conference, Hackney Town Hall.
26 ▼ Diane Biondo play, Oval House Theatre.
We Were One Man & Times of Harvey Milk, Roxie Cinema Club.
My Beautiful Laundrette, Ritzy Cinema.
Carol Grimes & Bernard Padden in Caberet, Stoke Newington Town Hall.
Normal Heart, Benefit Performance, Albery theatre.
27 ▼ Berta Freistadt play, Oval House Theatre.
Tom Wakefield, novelist, at the CLR James library Hackney.
Opening of the new Lesbian and Gay Centre, Greenwich, 4pm.
28 ▼ South London Gay Pride Festival, St Johns Chuch Hall -afternoon fa fair, evening, Mark Bunyan concert and disco.
29 ▼ Playreading by Karen Malpede, Oval House Theatre.
Streamers matinee, Ritz,
30 ▼ Hazel Dean, Shaw Theatre.
31 ▼ Hollywood Camp, Bloolips, Shaw Theatre.

JULY

1 ▼ Dido Queen of Carthage, Kit Marlowe, Oval House Theatre.
2 ▼ Pink Feet, Warm Bodies Dance Troupe, Oval House Theatre.
3 ▼ Kwame Boakye playreading, Oval House Theatre.
4 ▼ Nigel Young playreading, Oval House Theatre.
5 ▼ Peter Bradley playreading, Oval house theatre.
PRIDE 86 CARNIVAL PARADE Commencing Speakers' Corner 1pm, Culminating in a Communards concert and Caberet Tent.
6▼ Before Stonewall matinee, Ritzy Cinema.
13 ▼ Jean Cocteau film matinee, Ritzy Cinema.

Venues

Ritzy Cinema 737 2121
Metro Cinema 437 0757
Oval House Thetre582 7680
Heaven Nightclub 839 3852
Albany Empire, Deptford 6921 3333
Rio Cinema 254 6677
Donmar Warehouse 240 8230
Roxie Cinema Club439 3657
Albery Theatre 836 3878
Shaw Theatre 388 1394

MANCHESTER
June 28: allnight party Brookfield Hotel, Rusholme
Contact 228 3554.

LIVERPOOL
2-4 July, season of gay films, Royal Institution.
Contact708 9552.

SHEFFIELD
June 25 Public Meeting, Upperthorpe Branch Library,
contact 0742-58449X89.

NEWCASTLE
June 30, Pride 86 disco, Rockshots1.
Contacts 273 8520.

BRADFORD
June 25 Conference & Disco University Students Union.

BRISTOL
a plethora of activities including formation swimming.....
contact 425927.

CARDIFF
June 26 Pride March
Contact 45941.

EDINBURGH
June 21 Cabaret at the Assembly Rooms
Contact 557 1662.

LEICESTER
June 21 Day festival, Town Hall Square.
Contact 550667.

NOTTINGHAM
Lesbians and Gays in Nottingham, exhibition at County Library.
Contact 780124.

READING
JUly 5 Coach to Pride Carnival.
Contact 597269.

PERSONAL

There are only 24 hours in the day

I identify as a bisexual man. I love both my wife and a male lover. I feel that I need a full relationship with both my partners and loving both seems perfectly natural to me. The difficulties arise firstly because my two partners find it difficult to cope with the idea of sharing a relationship which our society considers exclusive and in which either partner is supposed to be everything to the other.

Secondly, all three of us find it difficult organising daily life. Whichever partner I am not with knows that I have chosen not to be with them, they also have to face being on their own. For my part, this leaves me being torn between the pleasures of being with one and the guilt of not being with the other. I do love them both and they are both beginning to accept this and to appreciate that they are not in competition for my love. However, there are only 24 hours in the day so in a very real sense they are in competition for my time.

Recently my wife has suggested that we all live together. Clearly this would lessen the need to make choices and reduce feelings of loneliness. On the other hand, we would lose a certain intimacy which would be particularly difficult for my male lover and I because we have not known each other long enough to be able to feel intimate even when others are around.

We are only too aware that relationships involving three people tend to be unstable. It would be useful to see from other peoples' experience whether living together is a realistic possibility.

I suspect that many more people would identify as bisexual if it was perceived as an option. We use the terms homo/heterosexual to describe people when we are really describing their behaviour. Is it really sensible to describe a man who has behaved heterosexually for years,and then comes out, as a 'closet gay'? Maybe sexual orientation changes according to needs and circumstances. Maybe the desire to behave in a homosexual way, and the guilt generated by it, inhibit further straight behaviour and viceversa. I am not arguing that everyone should act bisexually but that everyone should have that option. It is the common experience of those of us who identify as bisexual that others - gays and straights - deny the validity of our experience. However circumstances show me that I have the potential to relate sexually to both men and women. Adam.

LETTERS

As of writing,I'm in the process of word-processing the latest issue of the Boston Bisexual Women's New Newsletter which reprints David Smith's 'Breaking The Mould' and 'Silent Sacrifice' (BI-MONTHLY 11). The articles are superb. I am very pleased that we are exchanging newsletters.

What strikes me particularly is that with this exchange, our endeavors become just that bit more global. I hesitate to say 'struggle' at this point - not because I don't think it applies, I do; but because it's time to endeavor, with all the positive, optimistic strength that word entails despite all hardships. You are doing tremendous work; that and and your very existence are cause for celebration.

As for being noticed as bisexual, I am happy to report that I have recently come out to my next door neighbor, who has four young child children and is a Born-Again Christian. She and I have debated on everything from abortion to homosexuality to the rifts among churches. She talks to angels and I talk to the Goddess. She has a sticker proclaiming love for Jesus ane I have a sticker remembering the Salem witch trials. We have differed on how we view the words 'witch' and 'pagan' but we recognize where our biases come from; What is important is that we talk and make our feelings to each other clear. She and I are close friends, part of a neighborhood support group that has arisen naturally - when I came out to her, my bisexuality was a moot point. This does not mean it was denied. It means that my sexuality was simply accepted as part of the person I am, along with all my other facets. She has had me over for Christmas dinner. I will have her over for Seder. If she and I can give each other mutual support support, why not the rest·of the world?

Elissa Malcohn, Woburn, Mass.

Research thesis

I am currently working on a research thesis looking at gay and bisexual men and leisure activities. I am particularly keen to hear from members of The London Bisexual Group who might have details of the effects of discrimination, aspects of the family (including marital) life, and how sexuality might have affected their choice of leisure time use. It would be very useful to hear from sportsmen, artists and others who find their sexuality an important aspect in their game or art.

Rick Osborne, Box 41, Telford

One felt harangued ...

Just a few observations on earlier editions. A publication was welcome and overdue, but generally it was too purely gay/political. One felt harangued by long abstract articles, which made it hard for me to identify with the contents. often. It's hard to say what exactly I wanted from a bisexual magazine, but possibly help with clarification of personal feelings and valuable experiences of others in the difficulties of relating to more than one gender.

While reflecting the rights of bisexuals and all people to their own views, the magazine should encourage its readers to question the family and its socialising processes, the class system, and provide access and support for those fighting sexism and heterosexism. This should be done on a regular and committed basis.

This mav be the only maqazine to provide readers of both sexes with a chance to discuss the issues of sexuality and sexual oppression, and because of this unique position of bisexualitv the maq could become an important national journal on the questions of feminism, gay/lesbian rights and experience.

Stuart Walmsley.

Five years on

Five years time? Hopefully foursomes will be a more common way to live. More sex-education materials like 'Make it Happy' but with more lesbian/gay sex 'gory details'. No more need for libel laws covering sexuality. And sensible customs officers!

Ian Walters, Leamington Spa.

Can you help?

One of our blind bisexual members would be very interested to have BI-MONTHLY on tape or in Braille - Elsa Beckett, GEMMA, London

We welcome your comments on all aspects of bisexuality and other topics. Please keep your letters short and address them to The Editors BI-MONTHLY 1 Lycett House London SW2 4UZ enclosing your telephone number (not for publication).

Advertisement

London Bisexual Group

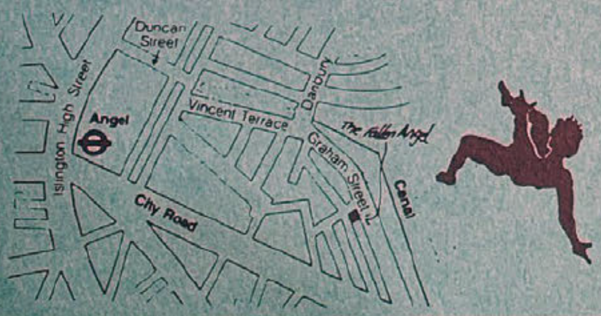
Expand Your Horizons.

The London Bisexual Group meets every Monday at a friendly and pleasant pub in Islington. Here you can enjoy a delicious small meal or sample their choice of local beers before joining us for one of our informal get-togethers or a lively discussion. Hundreds of men and women have done so in the last few years. Why don't you come and make some new friends. You'll be surprised.

Our programme of events for June & July:

JUNE
2 Non-Bisexual Friends Night - Bring a straight or gay friend or partner
9 Assertion - A talk by Ms Alix Hazelrigg
16 Being Yourself - A talk by Rachel O'Connor
23 Bisexuality, Transvestites and Transexuals - Kate
30 Social - All welcome
JULY
5 Pride '86 Carnival Parade - See you there
6 Sunday Picnic - Hyde Park near Serpentine Restaurant at 2pm
7 Non-Competitive Games - With Sarah McGee
12/13 The Fourth National Conference On Bisexuality
14 Bisexuality and Monogamy - Talk by Rachel O'Connor
21 Working with the Lesbian and Gay World - Talk by Matt Milne
28 Social - All welcome

THE FALLEN ANGEL
HOW TO GET THERE



Meetings start at 8.30pm. For further information write to BM BI London WC1N 3XX.

You never know until you've tried it. LBG.

THE NORMAL HEART

PRIDE '86 BENEFIT

Thursday 26th June 1986

tickets from The Albery Theatre on 01-836 3878

Bisexuals and Pride

Why should bisexuals join in Lesbian and Gay Pride '86? The simple answer is that Pride '86 is a fortnight of celebration of same-sex relations and that as bisexuals we are part of that. It is time we showed the world that bisexuals exist, that there are lots of us, and that we're proud to be bisexual.

Why is Pride '86 necessary? Superficially it looks as though homosexuality is becoming more and more acceptable, with Bronski Beat and the Communards, My Beautiful Launderette and Kiss of the Spider Woman achieving mainstream success. It is becoming obvious to some that the gay market is lucrative, that alcohol isn't the only thing gay men (mainly) will buy. But this commercial breakthrough is very limited. Against it must be weighed the virulent homophobia of the popular press, especially around AIDS, the seizure this year of yet more lesbian and gay books by Customs and Excise, queerbashing and even murder, the denial of their children to lesbian mothers, the denial of health care to gay and bisexual men who have refused the HTLV III test, the recent conviction of two men for insulting behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace for kissing in the street, the fact that it is legal to sack someone for not being heterosexual, and the myriad other ways in which society gently hints that it would prefer us to be straight.

Pride fights back against all these and against the underlying attitudes that cause them. It shows us our own strength and diversity and it shows straight society that we are not prepared to be victims.

As bisexuals, we suffer these and other manifestations of oppression just as lesbians and gay men do. It is up to us to do something about it. For it is not true, as we are sometimes told, that when threatened bisexuals can disappear safely into heterosexual society. We are not playing at our sexuality. We can't trim it neatly at will to conform to heterosexuality - or homosexuality - and nor would we want to. We are proud to be bisexual.

Bisexuals have always been involved in lesbian and gay pride, but we have not always been visible as bisexuals. This year is likely to be Britain's biggest-ever Pride festival, with events all over the country from June 19th. There will be plays, discos, parties, rallies, marches, meetings, picnics and more in just about every city, culminating on Saturday July 5th with the biggest-ever march and Carnival in London. It will be a day to take stereotypes and predjudices and throw them in the faces of those who made them. Be ordinary or be outrageous, bring a banner or just yourself, and let's make it the biggest-ever bisexual contingent too!

Kate Fearnley

Advertisement

EDINBURGH BISEXUAL GROUP meets every Thursday at 7.30 for discussions, guest speakers, socialising, action and more. Usually we meet at the Lesbian and Gay Community Centre, 58A Broughton St., Edinburgh, EH1 3SA, but at the moment it's being refurbished, so we're round the corner at 16 Hart St., 1st Floor. For details, phone Kate: 031-556 0497. Wheelchair access to meetings is a problem because of stairs, but phone and we'll fix something!